United Nations A/72/760

General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 February 2018

Original: English

**Seventy-second session**
Agenda item 104
**Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region**

## Letter dated 13 February 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Cyprus, Egypt and Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to inform you that the fifth trilateral meeting between the President of the Republic of Cyprus, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic was held in Nicosia on 21 November 2017.

Following the meeting, a joint declaration was adopted reaffirming the consensus among the three countries on current international and regional issues and outlining the parameters and principles for their trilateral cooperation aimed at promoting the values and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, good neighbourly relations, peace and stability (see annex).*

It would be greatly appreciated if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 104.

(*Signed*) Kornelios **Korneliou**
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* The annex is being circulated in the language of submission only.



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## Annex to the letter dated 13 February 2018 from the Permanent Representatives of Cyprus, Egypt and Greece to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

### Joint Declaration following the 5th Cyprus-Egypt-Greece Trilateral Summit Nicosia, 21 November 2017

The President of the Republic of Cyprus, Mr Nicos Anastasiades, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mr Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, and the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, Mr Alexis Tsipras, met in Nicosia on 21 November 2017. They took stock of the achievements from previous trilateral Summits, which reinforced the vitality and the robust nature of the trilateral mechanism. They expressed their firm commitment to further broaden and deepen their trilateral partnership in various fields of common interest and to enhance their efforts towards promoting peace, stability, security and prosperity in the Eastern Mediterranean based on their common values and interests.

The Heads of State and Government concurred that the guiding principles of the tripartite partnership are the respect of international law and of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, including commitment to good neighbourly relations, international peace and security, respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States.

Given the geopolitics of the region and the historic relations between the three countries, the Summit reaffirmed the importance of closer cooperation and policy coordination in many fields. At this Summit, it was agreed to enhance trilateral cooperation in the fields of Energy, Migration, Tourism, Environment, Protection of Cultural Heritage, Information and Communication Technology, Agriculture and the Diaspora. The Heads of State and Government welcomed the progress achieved so far in these sectors and encouraged further cooperation, including through the implementation of specific projects that are to the benefit of their respective peoples.

They welcomed the planting of a symbolic olive grove in Egypt involving 4500 olive seedlings originating from Cyprus, Egypt and Greece in equal numbers. They acknowledged that the olive tree, as a symbol of peace and prosperity, best symbolizes the underlying principles of this tripartite cooperation that aims at promoting peace and stability in the region, and enhancing people's prosperity through joint actions and solidarity.

This current trilateral partnership serves as an exemplar for furthering dialogue and promoting the relations between the European Union (EU) countries and the countries of the region. In this respect, the Heads of State and Government reiterated the vital importance of strong and solid EU-Egypt relations, which will contribute to the peace and stability in both the Middle East and Europe.

The Heads of State and Government reviewed the relationship between the EU and Egypt, highlighting the mutual benefit deriving from various areas of cooperation between the two sides. In this regard, they welcomed the 7th EU-Egypt Association Council, held on 25 July 2017, and the adoption of the jointly negotiated EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities that pave the way for a reinforced, mutually beneficial partnership leading towards a stronger strategic engagement in areas of common interest. They agreed that a strategic partnership between the EU and Egypt is an essential framework for addressing pressing common challenges such as terrorism and extremist ideologies, irregular migration, sustainable development, and achieving economic prosperity.

The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to working closely together towards further developing various aspects of the EU-Egypt partnership, on the basis of principles of mutual respect, joint ownership, common interests and reciprocal commitments. The Heads of State and Government stressed the importance of the Union for the Mediterranean for the countries of the region.

The Heads of State and Government also reaffirmed their willingness to continue their excellent cooperation in the context of International Organizations and especially within the UN system, by also supporting each other's candidatures in these fora.

They underlined the importance of preserving and protecting the cultural heritage of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East, in general, and emphasized their resolve to counter looting and illicit trafficking in cultural property including cultural property originating in armed conflict areas. In the same vein, the Heads of State and Governments called for further steps to prevent and prohibit the illicit trade in cultural properties and promote cooperation in restoring illicitly trafficked cultural properties. They welcomed the "Convention on Offences Related to Cultural Property", the "Nicosia Convention", which was opened for signature on 19 May 2017 in Nicosia, in the context of the Cyprus Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the only international treaty specifically dealing with the criminalization of the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

They are also determined to join efforts for the protection of underwater cultural heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean from illicit excavations and damage that might be caused by other activities and to develop a framework of close consultation and cooperation on this issue.

They welcomed the 2nd Athens Conference on Religions and Cultural Pluralism and Peaceful Coexistence in the Middle East, held on 29–31 October 2017, and its value as a forum for enhancing tolerance, harmony, coexistence among persons belonging to different religions and cultures in the region and protect their cultural heritages.

They also welcomed the Ancient Civilizations Forum (ACForum), held in Athens on 24 April 2017, focusing on culture as one of the main drivers of soft power in international relations.

The Heads of State and Government expressed their satisfaction with the convening of the 2nd Rhodes Informal Ministerial Conference for Security and Stability, which was held on the 22 and 23 May 2017, under the theme: "Living and Working Together in Peace and Stability". In this respect, they reiterated their determination to promote, amid diverse security challenges for the Eastern Mediterranean, a positive agenda of cooperation for the benefit of this strategically, economically and culturally important neighbourhood, making it a safer place for its people to prosper.

The Heads of State and Government acknowledged that the youth represent the hope for the future of their countries and wider region. In this respect, they welcomed the successful World Youth Forum held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, from 4–9 November 2017. They also welcomed the initiative of the 2nd Euro-Arab Summit "Towards a Solid Alliance", held in Athens on 9–10 November 2017.

The Heads of State and Government reviewed the progress of projects already underway within the trilateral mechanism and discussed additional areas of cooperation.

They recalled their common interest in establishing and developing trilateral cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology and its applications and welcomed the signing by their respective Ministers of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology, which took place on 5 July 2017, in Cairo.

The Heads of State and Government were particularly pleased to inaugurate today the Cyprus Egypt Greece Collaborative Innovation Network (CEG COIN) headquartered in Egypt and branches in Cyprus and Greece, respectively. The CEG COIN will serve as a platform to enhance collaboration, networking and business matchmaking of the innovation ecosystems of the three countries.

They also welcomed the Trilateral Declaration signed at Ministerial level on environment-related issues in Cairo, on 29 May 2017. Recognising the importance of international commitments, the possible impact of transboundary projects and the challenges facing the Mediterranean region, they expressed the intention to pursue joint actions in the following five priority areas: Preparedness and response to major marine pollution incidents in the Mediterranean; Combating coastal erosion and coastal zone management; Biological diversity and nature protection; Waste management; and Climate change adaptation.

The common challenges faced in the energy field, the need for diversification of energy resources and routes, the security of energy supply and the need to modernize and develop new energy infrastructures, enrich the prospects for further promoting trilateral energy cooperation. In this context, aspects of cooperation especially in the areas of hydrocarbons, electricity and renewable energy sources were discussed. To this end, they also encouraged and welcomed initiatives from the private sector of mutually beneficial energy infrastructure projects, which contribute to the energy security of all three countries such as the EuroAfrica Interconnector.

They welcomed the signing by the Ministers responsible for Tourism of a Protocol aimed at promoting the development and strengthening of cooperation in the field of cruise tourism in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, with a view to increasing the tourist flows to the three countries.

The three countries share historic ties, which bind one to the other through, inter alia, their diaspora. The Heads of State and Government welcomed the trilateral meeting between the Commissioner and Ministers of the three countries responsible for Diaspora Affairs held on 2–3 October 2017 in Cairo. The Heads of State and Government agreed to further develop cooperation through the identification of specific initiatives involving the diaspora.

They welcomed the recent trilateral meeting of their Foreign Ministers held on 22 September 2017, in the margins of the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly in New York. They reiterated the importance and efficacy of this trilateral consultations mechanism concerning foreign policy issues, which reaffirms the mutual commitment of the three States to cooperate and work towards promoting security and stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and wider region.

The Heads of State and Government agreed to intensify efforts to tackle regional challenges, to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, increase information sharing and promote regional security, long-term stability and prosperity. They strongly call on transit countries to share information regarding foreign terrorists Fighters (FTFs) with concerned states and international organizations in particular Interpol. They expressed solidarity to the people and the Government of Egypt, who are suffering from acts of terrorism which seek to destabilize the country, and who

are at the forefront of the efforts to fight terrorism both inside the country and in the region.

The Heads of State and Government agreed that, on the basis of the principles of solidarity and equitable burden-sharing, the effective management of large movements of refugees and migrants is the responsibility not only of neighbouring States and of Europe, but also of the international community as a whole. To this end, initiatives should be undertaken to address the root causes of this complex phenomenon through cooperation between countries of destination, origin and transit including in relation to developmental aspects. The Heads of State and Government also expressed appreciation for Egypt's efforts to address migration challenges, by accommodating refugees and migrants and working to prevent illegal migration flows as well as smuggling and trafficking of human beings.

The Heads of State and Government stressed the importance of the respect of the sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction each State has over its maritime zones in accordance with international law, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and expressed their desire to strengthen their cooperation through a series of agreements on the exploitation and transfer of natural gas, where the discovery of hydrocarbon reserves would serve as a catalyst for regional stability and prosperity. They underlined that this cooperation is based on the well-established rules of international law. In this respect, they emphasized the universal character of the UNCLOS and stressed their commitment to proceed expeditiously with the negotiations on the delimitation of their common maritime boundaries as appropriate.

They called on Turkey to cease all illegal activities within the maritime zones of Cyprus and refrain from similar actions in the future.

The Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their unwavering support to the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus for a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem that will reunify Cyprus in a viable, functional state in line with UN Security Council resolutions and international law. They stressed that a comprehensive settlement must safeguard Cyprus' independence and sovereignty, without outdated security arrangements which allow for the right of foreign military intervention and without foreign troops. They underlined that the United Nations remains the forum, through which a settlement can be achieved under the Good Offices mission of the UN Secretary-General.

On the Palestinian issue, they called for a just, negotiated and lasting peace settlement entailing a two-state solution based on the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, through the establishment of a sovereign, viable and contiguous Palestinian state based on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, living in peace with all its neighbours. They also stressed that the two-state solution is the only solution that responds satisfactorily to Israeli and Palestinian security needs and Palestinian aspirations.

They recognised the instrumental role played by Egypt in the conclusion of the agreement between Fatah and Hamas in Cairo, on 22 October 2017, aiming at intra-Palestinian reconciliation. They welcomed the full return of the Gaza crossings to the control of the Palestinian Authority as a significant development in the implementation of the agreement reached in Cairo. They underlined the importance that the agreement delivers on the ground.

On Syria, the Heads of State and Government expressed their commitment to the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Syrian state. They expressed their firm belief that only a credible political solution, as defined in

UNSCR 2254 and the 2012 Geneva Communique, will ensure the stability of Syria and enable a defeat of Da'esh and other UN-designated terrorist groups in Syria. They reaffirmed their support to the UN Special Envoy, Staffan de Mistura, and to his efforts to convene the 8th round of the intra-Syrian talks in Geneva, on 28 November.

On Libya, the Heads of State and Government welcomed the appointment of Ghassan Salamé as new Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and the "Action Plan for Libya" presented during a high-level meeting on 20 September 2017. They expressed their deep concern for the continued threat posed by terrorism in Libya, as well as smuggling and trafficking through Libya and encouraged all Libyan parties to work constructively with SR Salamé.

On Iraq, they expressed support to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. All parties within Iraq, as well as all regional actors, should exercise restraint and avoid unilateral steps and actions. All outstanding issues should be resolved by Iraqis through peaceful and constructive dialogue within the provisions of the Iraqi constitution. They also expressed their deep sorrow over the tragic aftermath of the earthquake that struck the wider region on the evening of 12 November, while they addressed sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

On Yemen, they expressed their concern with the escalation of violence and the deteriorating humanitarian crisis, including the massive outbreak of cholera. They expressed support for a peaceful and negotiated political solution, in accordance with the relevant UNSCR that would bring an end to the conflict which has devastating consequences for the country and its population and seriously undermines regional stability.

The Heads of State and Government encouraged by the positive results thus far and convinced by the strategic importance of the trilateral cooperation will continue to work closely on issues of mutual interests to the benefit of their peoples and of the peoples of the wider region.